

# THE WARSAW WEEKLY

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## THE PROBLEM OF POPULATION IN INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

There are two principle forces acting on the regime of every country and on its historical destinies over and above the geographical conditions for which it lives: the dynamic forces of its population, and the economic resources the nation has at its disposal. These forces not only sway the internal structure of a nation but also play a primary role in the relations between States.

The complicated play of interests which, in the present period of production, is peculiar to international trade and economic service, makes the problem of economic possessions one of primary importance in the daily life of nations. It follows, then, that in international politics the problem of man, although one of considerable complexity and not yet free of the question of populations in general, is only secondary. Meanwhile, the periodic cataclysms shattering the peaceful relations between states in various parts of the world testify that the pressure of over-populated countries on territories more or less empty, — i. e. the factor of finding areas to populate with the overflow, — is one of the constituent elements of history, and should be taken seriously into consideration by those responsible for the course of events in international politics.

There can be no doubt that the Italian conflict with Abyssinia or the recent incidents in the Far-East may be traced to the problem of population, a problem motivating Italy no less than the Land of the Rising Sun. The same holds true for the Jewish question and the present situation in Palestine, which cannot be settled definitely once and for all and less it be approached not only from a religious or national angle, but as much from the demographic, i. e. as a problem resulting from the relative over-population and defective social and economic structure of the Jewish population in certain countries.

Poland is one of the States for which the problem of increasing population is of major moment whenever she must take a stand on far-reaching questions in international politics. It must be remembered that as regards both the density of population and the area occupied by it, Poland ranks sixth among the nations of Europe, and that she has a natural increase placing her fourth in the world; in this respect among the great nations of the globe, Poland is surpassed only by Japan. This dynamic increase in Poland reaching 400,000 souls yearly is not sufficiently counterbalanced by her national economic wealth to permit of the rational utilization of this periodic increase of

human energy in the economic life of the State. Poland possesses neither the necessary capitals nor the raw materials indispensable for an industrialization that might ensure an economic existence for her entire population.

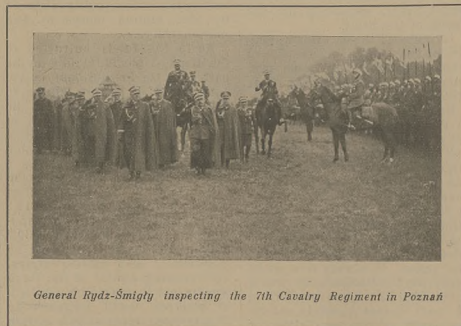
All these circumstances oblige Poland to regard the problem of emigration as one of primary importance. The over-density of population in rural districts, no less than the Jewish question arising above all out of the faulty social and economic structure of the Jewish population, cannot be relieved unless emigrants from Poland be absorbed by uninhabited over-sea territories still lying fallow and untouched by civilization.

To solve the problem of emigration, two agents in harmonious cooperation are required: one, a country with an excess population; and the other, countries disposing of excess lands not yet exploited. There are in South America immense virgin territories which, as their respective governments have repeatedly stated, lack settlers; and in Africa there is no lack of vast areas perfectly adapted climatically to habitation by European colonists.

The third agent indispensable for the logical solution of the burning problem of over-population in certain European States, is the capital which would enable the organization of normal emigration on a large scale. The low rates of interest prevailing in the great banking centers of the world indicates the existence of such capitals lying idle and awaiting an opportunity for rational employment.

Since, therefore, all the evidence seems to show that the three essential elements are available, i. e. overpopulated centers, unutilized territories, and idle capital, it would seem that with a little good will and cooperation on the part of the international parties interested and authorized, namely, — States with willing emigrants, States with unexploited territories, and States which are at present the bankers of the world, — it might be possible to solve one of the most vital problems of over-populated and impoverished Europe. The matter of emigration is meriting the most vigilant attention of the League of Nations. The League has of late undergone experiences that have seriously shaken its prestige, and which really arose out of important demographic problems that had been neglected. These experiences should, therefore, induce the League not to consider these matters in theory alone, but to find a practical solution to the demographic problems mentioned which constitute one of the essential factors for the pacification of Europe.

(P. I. P.)



General Rydz-Śmigły inspecting the 7th Cavalry Regiment in Poznań

## A SPEECH OF GENERAL RYDZ-ŚMIGŁY

Poznań. Gen. Rydz-Śmigły, the Inspector General of the Armed Forces, attended the ceremony of the handing to the 7th Cavalry Regiment of their new regimental ensign by the delegates of the Polish parish of Passaic, N. Y. State, U. S. A., who have executed it as a proof of their attachment to the army of their home country.

After speeches of the Poles from America and of the representatives of the local authorities, gen. Rydz-Śmigły spoke himself, addressing the soldiers of the 7th Regiment. He said that the days when the bravery of a cavalry charge was enough to win a victory were past and that what was needed more than enthusiasm was thoroughness and devotion to duty, even in the smallest tasks. "The life of today, as the war of to-day, are built of many minute components, which can provide a good foundation, although they are prosaic enough themselves, for a display

of noble enthusiasm, bravery and self sacrifice." "If all these apparently insignificant tasks will be carried out well, your undoubted readiness to give your lives to the country will bring about an important result — a soldiers death on the battlefield will be not only an act of heroism, but also an act of victorious heroism." The industrial preparedness was probably what the general has been alluding to.

One of the preceding speakers had stated that the eyes of the whole of Poland are turned upon gen. Rydz-Śmigły. To this the general replied that the nation looks not on him but on the army, of which he is the head. This utterance proves once more that gen. Rydz-Śmigły has no personal ambitions and regards his role in the country as being the natural outcome of the fact that he is the Commander-in-Chief nominated by Marshal Piłsudski himself.

(A. T. E.)

## POLISH COLONIAL CLAIMS

Warsaw. In the course of 1935, Poland's population increased by 405,000 and the figures for the first half of 1936 prove that the end of the current year will show an even larger surplus. The public opinion has been well aware for a long time of the necessity of finding outlets for the excess of population. An active propaganda for colonies and for the building up of Polish naval power is conducted by the Naval and Colonial League, with its 500,000 members.

The attitude of the government, at first somewhat reserved, is now becoming clearer. There are several ways of disposing with the surplus of population — there is simple emigration, which usually terminates in the return of the emigrants to the mother country after about ten years, with some money, representing but a small fraction of the value

of the labour given by them during that time to the foreign country. Such is the character of Polish emigration to European countries, such as France, where there are about 600,000 Polish emigrants.

The emigrant to overseas countries, such as those of South America, often strikes even a worse bargain. The return home is more difficult, and the risk of exploitation by local employers greater. Both these types of emigration are generally speaking a net loss to the country, but they were unavoidable when no other alternative presented itself, as was the case before Poland's resurrection as an independent power. There are some 8 million Poles in the world outside Poland, and with the exception of the Poles in contiguous countries, like Germany, they are emigrants

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## LONDON LETTER

By Gregory Macdonald

Parliament has adjourned, the Cabinet has gone out of permanent session for a month, and the country has turned to the August holiday, ushered in by the Bank Holiday of the first Monday of August which can never come now without memories of 1914. Nevertheless, this year everything except the weather is kinder than it has been for many years past. Tourist traffic during the past few weeks has been making new records all over the country, and there is no doubt but that the figures for the Bank Holiday will be exceptional. Nor is this only confined to the internal life of the country.

Despite the example set by the King and by Mr. Baldwin in cancelling their vacations in France and elsewhere would normally ensure that other people would do the same — the traffic through Dover last week was the highest ever known. Neither the civil war in Spain nor the prospect of an equal trouble in France deter the tourist.

From the West, American tourists pour into England. Here the Veteran's Bonus must be taken into account, and the rising tide of prosperity in the United States. Americans this year are not so eager to venture abroad into Vienna or Rome, so that England is feeling the full benefit of the dollar.

In the absence of internal political issues of any great importance, the gravity of the conflict in Spain is beginning to be canvassed. In any suburb it is now possible to find placards to the effect that the Truth About Spain will be declared at a public meeting on such and such a date, when Mr. X, just returned from the Workers' Olympiad in Spain will give an eye witness account. Or one may meet small party distributing leaflets, shouting in chorus, "Support the Spanish People against Fascism."

Yet somehow the streets absorb them, there are no signs of agreement or dissent, and the general conviction is left that as the Spaniards are foreigners they are likely to do this sort of thing every so often. In political clubs the argument is more exact: there it is seen that what is now at issue, as it was during the Abyssinian dispute, is the control of the Mediterranean; but not many people beyond the new generation of Oxford and Cambridge intellectuals are anxious to see the control of the Mediterranean dependent upon a Communist Spain.

So far as one can judge the situation, the bulk of opinion is on the side of the Army revolt. The Press is inclined to swing the same way, now that the first

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## London Letter.

(Continued from page 1)

week of confusion is over. *The Times*, much to the disgust of most of the weekly reviewers, are left in tendency, talks frankly of Red Rule in Barcelona. *The Daily Mail* is as ever on the side of Fascism. *The Daily Express* has an excellent group of correspondents on both sides, with the less censored reports coming from the Right.

*The News Chronicle* went fairly violently Popular Front and Communist for a week, and then, perhaps owing in part to protests from readers, became less belligerent; and the *Daily Herald*, which wears its Socialism with a difference, followed more tamely along the same path. Other heavier papers confine themselves to reporting the news, with stress, if anything, against the Popular Front. Yet it is the *de facto* and *de jure* Government, with what appears to be at the moment a fair command of the situation.

From the other side of the world, President Roosevelt's voice broke in upon radio listeners when his welcome at Quebec was relayed on the National wave-length. The event was as important as the Spanish civil war itself, for President Roosevelt's policy of the Americas united from the Arctic to the Antarctic was further on the way to fulfilment in preparation for the Pan-American Conference at Buenos Aires in December, while the demonstration of a common bond between the people of the United States has not been lost. Incidentally, President Roosevelt succeeded where the American General Montgomery failed a hundred and fifty years ago: for the first time in history the American flag floated over the Quebec Citadel.

This relay, which made a deep impression upon those who heard it, was followed next day by the relay from Berlin of the opening of the Olympic Games. So England is besieged from all sides by the voices of a new world in rapid process of formation. There is much to be thankful for in the fact that, after a disturbed year, the voices are promising peace. The Mediterranean conflict is being fought out in a manner which hardly disturbs the holidays.

Not the least interesting news of last week was the announcement of a Russian credit for £10,000,000 to enable the Soviets to buy British manufactures. The form in which the credit is granted is that the British Government guarantees payment to the manufacturers, while the Russian Government issues 5½ per cent. 5-Year Notes which will be taken up by the London Money Market at a premium. They are in effect British Government securities, welcomed because they fill a gap in the marketing funds outstanding. But the arrangement may also be taken as an answer to the successful commercial agreements carried out by Dr. Schaecht in south-eastern Europe. An Anglo-Turkish agreement is already forecast.

Yet the Russian credit has aroused some criticism because it ignores the rights of the holders of pre-war Russian Government obligations, who will not be able now to ventilate their grievance politically until Parliament re-assembles. There is also doubt about the wisdom of extending the export trade on the back of British Government credit, for the arrangement really means that the industrialist is exporting £10,000,000 worth of goods while the State payer is guaranteeing payment by the Russian Government. Until the payment is settled, however, the interest-bearing Notes will be a solace for the London money market.

## The Polish Production of Wool

Warsaw. Wool is one of the principal raw materials imported by Poland from abroad. In 1929 Poland imported 76.9 million zlotys worth of raw wool and 54 million zlotys worth of washed wool. The corresponding figures for 1935 are much lower, owing both to a drop in the prices of wool and to the decrease of the import of washed wool. In 1935 Poland imported 35.5 million zlotys worth of raw wool and 14.2 million zlotys worth of washed wool.

There has been in the last years a marked increase in the interest shown by Polish agriculture in wool production and sheep breeding. The authorities have helped its development by increasing the obligatory percentage of Polish wool in cloths purchased by the government, which is a large buyer, especially for the needs of the army.

In spite of these efforts only 18% of the Polish consumption of wool is supplied by home producers, the remaining 82% being still imported.

Until 1934 the number of sheep in Poland has remained practically constant at about two and half million. In 1935 the first larger increase in many years has been noted, the number of sheep increased by 250,000, that is nearly 9%. As Poland's population increases at a fast rate, the proportion of sheep per 100 inhabitants has decreased in the last years. It stands now at 83 sheep per 1000 inhabitants, which shows that the home production of wool cannot possibly satisfy the needs of the population for a long time to come.

In some parts of the country sheepskins are largely worn in the winter, and the skins for this purpose are supplied mainly by home breeders. Of the three principal varieties of sheep, 60% of the 2½ millions which Poland had in 1934 were of the breed used for sheepskin making, 16% fine fleeced, and 24% rough-fleeced.

The Polish production of wool in 1934 was 5,300 tons of raw wool, 12,270 tons of washed wool. 2,800 tons of washed wool have been imported in the same year. Reckoning one ton of washed wool as equivalent to four tons of raw wool, the total consumption of raw wool in Poland amounted to about 29,000 tons of raw wool.

(A. T. E.)

## ANGLO-BALTIC LINE S.S. "Baltrover"

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The King's cruise in the *Nahlin* will be of interest for the whole of Europe; the plans so far discussed display his usual independence. Unable to stay in the South of France, he intends to go into the Mediterranean itself, and through the Adriatic to Dalmatia, as though the tension of the past year had never existed. This is a generous and a careless gesture which should in itself go far to allay any remaining feeling between Great Britain and Italy; for on that cruise the King will have the good wishes not only of his own people and of the Yugoslavians but of the Italian people as well. The end of it will see the resumption of diplomatic activity in Europe, unless events in Spain precipitate an earlier crisis, and it cannot be said that either statesmen or people are above the necessity of a short holiday.

## The Activities of the National Economic Bank in 1935

The activities of the National Economic Bank during the year under review register a further important expansion which is shown primarily by a marked growth in short, medium and long term credits. The total of credits, according to the Report of Directors of the National Economic Bank rose in the past year from 1,815 million zlotys to 1,962.3 million zlotys, the increase being entirely in cash credits, while transactions in mortgage bonds and debentures showed a slight fall.

The Bank's own capital rose in 1935 to 199.2 million zlotys, showing an increase of over two million as compared with 1934. On the other hand the debt relief funds for agriculture and local authorities were jointly reduced by 26.2 million zlotys to 44.8 million zlotys.

As to the funds entrusted to the Bank, deposits (mainly on the part of State Institutions) decreased by 27.5 million zlotys to 289.9 million zlotys, whilst the Treasury deposits increased, at the same time, by 51.0 million to 540.0 million zlotys. In addition to deposits, the Bank shows a new item on the balance sheet. "The Deposits for Special Purposes"—with an amount of 12.3 million zlotys. The total of deposits and funds amounts to 839.2 million zlotys, thus showing an increase of 35.8 million zlotys.

The working capital of the Bank was further increased by a growth of bankers credit balances by 23.4 million zlotys to 56.5 million zlotych and rediscount of bills of exchange and acceptances of the Acceptance Bank by 23. million zlotys to 50.0 million zlotys. Returning to the credit activities of the Bank it should be mentioned that the National Economic Bank always tended toward the financing of such enterprises as have connection with public needs. In the total of the cash credits of the Bank, credits for public purposes have a definite preponderance over those for private purposes. The cash credits granted in 1935 for purposes having con-

nection with public needs amounted to 634 million zlotys, showing an increase of over 54 million zlotys over the year. Judging from the respective amounts of loans granted, the credit activities of the Bank are chiefly concerned with the financing of building construction and of local authorities, as well as industry and agriculture. In the course of the year under review there was a further improvement in the situation in the undertakings associated with the National Economic Bank. During 1935 the Bank continued its policy of the former years, aiming to improve the financial standing of these concerns. The results showing the balance sheet of the main undertakings belonging to the concerns are satisfactory. They have earned a gross profit which will permit of a partial and in some instances of a complete writing off of the capital invested, in proportion to the wear and tear experienced by the plant during the operating year.

Thanks to the growth in the funds acquired by the Bank for building purposes, there was a further expansion of the development and building action. In addition to the loans, granted for the construction of small dwelling houses and of large housing blocks, the financial plan for 1935 provided for credits out of the State Building Fund for the erection of Workmen's Buildings and financial assistance for the construction of buildings in health and climatic resorts.

The building activities of the Bank attracted large amounts of private capital. The aggregate cost involved in the construction of small dwelling houses was 52.5 million zlotys, of which the Bank advanced 29.3 per cent, the balance being in private hands.

In regard to the construction of large house blocks and repairs, the total cost of which was 63.2 million zlotys, the advances of the Bank represented 26.7 per cent.

## Polish colonial claims

(Continued from page 1)

or their descendants. To send more millions of her people wandering abroad in foreign lands would be folly for Poland, unless satisfactory conditions could be guaranteed to them. This would be the case if Poland had territories in underpopulated parts of the world, reserved for her use. It seems very probable that sooner or later Poland will put forward this question in the international field, whether claiming a mandate from the League of Nations or otherwise.

The situation is complicated by the existence of a Jewish problem in Poland. There are in the country nearly 3 million Jews, most of them tradesmen and businessmen. This oneness of their pursuits, almost excluding from them the gentile population, constitutes a source of latent trouble, which is threatening to become more acute as time goes by. The PIP, the news agency inspired by the Polish Foreign Office, has published to-day an article which proves that the Jewish question is receiving close attention from the government. The PIP writes about stimulating Jewish emigration, which would be in the interest of the Jews themselves as well as of the remaining population. In the course of August next, one thousand Polish Jews will leave the country for Palestine. It will be seen that such a volume of emigration is not in proportion to the number of Jews in Poland, and that it cannot bring alone the solution of the problem. (A. T. E.)

## DANZIG LETTER

(from our own correspondent)

All attention just now is focused on Berlin and the Olympic games. The papers are full of pictures, the air rings with the loud-speakers turned on in every home, where all the the young people, and a good many of the older generation, are eagerly listening to the thrilling accounts of the records and achievements of their favourite athletes. For the time being in local politics there is a definite lull.

There has been one event of interest to business circles this week, in the arrival by the s/s *Baltrover*, of a British trade delegation. This party, headed by Sir Alexander Gibb, Chairman of the London Chamber of Commerce, is on a tour of the Baltic States, and among its sixteen members are leading representatives of British trade and industry, in the coal, steel, oil, textiles and other branches, and members of the Chambers of Commerce of Sheffield, Manchester, Derby, Wolverhampton and Newcastle, as well as London. This tour is really a return visit, and follows the visit last year to the United Kingdom of a trade delegation from Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania. After spending some hours in Danzig, the delegation left by train for Kaunas, Klaipeda, Riga and Tallinn.

The thundery weather rather spoiled the last days of our opera season this week, and one of the performances of "Parsifal" in the open-air theatre in the forest at Zoppot was interrupted, and had to be resumed the next evening. Nevertheless, it was a most successful season, only one performance having suffered from the weather, and the others having been attended by practically full house-bucks and repairs, the total cost of which was 63.2 million zlotys, the advances of the Bank represented 26.7 per cent.

Zoppot has been the scene of a spectacle of quite another kind, and the sailing regattas were held off Zoppot in beautiful sunny weather. Yachts of many nations took part, starting here for the Olympia race from Zoppot to Kiel, and the broad sweep of Danzig bay, dotted with sails gleaming in the sunshine was most picturesque.

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# JAN KASPROWICZ

(12.XII. 1860 — 1.VIII. 1926)

Ten years have passed since the death of the poet, Jan Kasproicz. On this anniversary, it is only fitting that a word be said in memory of one of Poland's mightiest poetic spirits.

Kasproicz was not a poet who delighted us only with the external beauty of his verses. He was above all a thinker and philosopher, searching out the deepest mysteries of human existence on earth and hereafter, waging a Prometheus battle with God in his striving to penetrate into human destiny and learn the truth. Hence arose all his misgivings and sufferings. But in the end, through his poetic intuition, his feeling, and understanding of the harmony of nature, he attained at least for himself, a perfect calm, an absolute faith in a life after death, and was able to pass confidently on to the new world.

In his poetic creation Kasproicz has three definite periods influenced partly by his peasant origin, his experiences, and his country of life. Born in 1860 in the little Cujavian village of Szymborka, he spent his childhood and youth in the country, where his keen but sympathetic eye saw all the misery, yet found all the beautiful values of the peasant's soul. The Cujavian country-side, a monotonous and depressing plain, contributed no little toward shaping the rather pessimistic psyche of the poet. Upon finishing his none too successful preliminary studies, he entered the University of Leipzig, but transferred soon after to that of Breslau which he finished. His political activity made it advisable for him to move to Lwów, where he soon won a name as a poet. Here he at once arose as the ardent defender of the peasants and fought tooth and nail for their rights, becoming through his poetic and politico-philosophical writings the true and passionate apostle of the people.

The second period, embracing the first decade of the XX century, evinces a far-reaching change in Kasproicz's spirit. He ripened, and began to feel and love more and more the beauty of nature. In it he recovered his faith in the immortality of the soul. It was still, however, the period of his battle against the God for "the light of faith in the darkness of ignorance"; the period of his Hymns, unique in their kind in the world's literature, in which his pain and despair in the battle and his utter indifference to his life on earth indicate the tremendous confusion in the poet's soul.

Only in the third and last period of his creative activity did Kasproicz enter his new world of thought. Here he found at last his true credo, and with it, calm. Faith and love, which always prompted him in his life,

now came into their own. The strength and power arising from them became his on his first contact with a new, hitherto unknown manifestation of nature—the mountains, more specifically the Tatry. The ominous peaks soaring up heavenward, at times menacing and again peaceful in the purest azure, struck his sensitive poetic spirit and have it new power. From this time his every leisure hour was spent in the Tatry, and there in his picturesque and beloved Harenda not far from Zakopane, he spent his last years, when his health no longer permitted him to continue his lectures at the University of Lwów. He died at Harenda in 1926, and his remains now lie in the special mausoleum erected near his homestead, in sight of the majestic Tatry he loved so well.

Konrad Górski in his very interesting study *The Tatry and Podhale in the Works of Jan Kasproicz*, gives an absorbing account of the development of Kasproicz's spirit after his contact with the beauty of the mountains. Górski points out that Kasproicz did not see the Tatry until after his youth was over. He fell under their spell at first sight, but his pessimism did not leave him. The mountains with their grandeur and gloom weighed down up the poet's imagination and philosophy of life, but continued intercourse with them gradually dispelled the sadness of despair from his heart. His last poems contain only the joy and internal harmony that his beloved hills brought him. Besides, the fantastic legends of the mountain people, their courage, their simple yet deep-rooted faith all began to work upon his mind and draw the outlines of a new conception of life both here and hereafter, based just upon this simplicity of the mountaineer's religion.

Górski likewise very aptly traces the evolution of the impressions made on Kasproicz by the Tatry. At first the post found himself in the struggle between his instinctive joy of life and the gloomy reflections that the mountains forced upon his mind. In time, however, the Tatry opened up a new road for him to calm and to the union of human soul with the universe. After conquering his pessimism and solving the problem of death, the poet found in the mountains the highest revelation of the joy of life. At the same time he discovered new moral values in the fact that the mountains, by exposing men to danger and thus forcing them to depend upon themselves, bring out unsuspected resources and powers in the human soul, schooling it to courage and love. Kasproicz thus showed himself a penetrating explorer as well as the most beautiful sides of the human spirit, as of the deepest mysteries of mountain beauty, probing them both with the intuition of genius.

To close this very cursory sketch of one of the greatest figures in Polish poetry, it would be well to mention, especially for non-Polish readers, another great service rendered by Jan

the Polish peasant observes a number of peculiar customs in the summer, customs which reach far into the dark period before the dawn of Polish history, and which evolved out of pagan beliefs, the cult of elemental gods, and sacrifices offered up to them. The most interesting and at the same time the most beautiful of them at this season are the *Sobótki* (St. John's Eve) in old times called the *Kapusta Holiday*, the *Dożynki* (Harvest Home), and the *Okreżne* (Harvest-Fest) much resembling the *Dożynki*.

ZOFJA STRYJEŃSKA. Wianki (The Wreaths).

ZOFJA STRYJEŃSKA. Dożynki (Harvest Home).

## POLISH SUMMER CUSTOMS

By Jerzy Macierakowski

The Polish peasant observes a number of peculiar customs in the summer, customs which reach far into the dark period before the dawn of Polish history, and which evolved out of pagan beliefs, the cult of elemental gods, and sacrifices offered up to them. The most interesting and at the same time the most beautiful of them at this season are the *Sobótki* (St. John's Eve) in old times called the *Kapusta Holiday*, the *Dożynki* (Harvest Home), and the *Okreżne* (Harvest-Fest) much resembling the *Dożynki*.

### The Sobótki or St. John's Eve.

In the old, old times this was a ceremony in worship of the sun. The sun as the element of light, heat and life was worshipped by ancient peoples and regarded as a divine being. In the summer solstice, i. e. in the shortest night of the year, the ancient Poles opened the ceremonies by lighting an enormous bonfire to see the whole night through, and about it began their celebrations and games in common.

With the *Mazurs* this *Kapusta Holiday* was a ceremony observed only by the women. The housewives and girls of a whole village assembled on a river side or on the banks of a broad brook as soon as the sun had set, bringing with them whole bundles and sheaves of various herbs for a sacrifice. When all were there, the bonfire was lighted and then the women took counsel to see if anybody was missing. If there were such absentees, they were regarded thenceforth as witches, were shunned by the village women, and if any evil befell the village, they were blamed for it without further ado. When the bonfire blazed up high, and deep night lay over heaven and earth, the women began the feast and the ceremonial dances belonging to it. The herbs were then sacrificed by throwing the greater part of them into the crackling flames. The smoke arising from this sacred fire was thought to preserve the votaries, their families, and their whole village from harm. To double secure themselves from evil powers, the women divided the herbs and the herbs among themselves to take home and hang from the rafters as a signal blessing from the gods.

At midnight a still greater bonfire was lighted and the women chanted the special songs connected with it as they twisted wreaths of herbs (mostly of mugwort) which they subsequently set afloat on the streamlets. After this the ceremony closed with choral singing and the return to their cottages.

Out of the *Sobótki* or *Kapusta Holiday*, the ceremony known to-day as the *Wianki* (Wreaths) observed on the Eve

Kasproicz to Polish culture. Apart from the very great amount of his original creation, he left behind him a mass of translations from Shakespeare, Marlowe, Byron, Shelley, Browning, Goethe, Schiller, Rostand, as well, from the great dramatist of antiquity, Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. This chapter of Kasproicz's activity, though not so important when viewed together with his original work, nevertheless merits the highest acknowledgement. For no one can translate the masterpieces of another nation so well as a writer of equal genius often with the author of the original work. In paying, then, a small, tribute to the memory of this poetic titan, we must also express our gratitude to him for giving us in our own language some of the poetry of the greatest geniuses in world literature.

of St. John (June 23) has evolved. These floating wreaths are supposed to ensure a successful year up to the next *Wianki*, and for young maidens, a speedy marriage.

The legend still persists among the peasants that on this one night of the year, the fern-flower may be found in blossom. And there are those among them who spend the night looking for this marvel, hoping to find both it and the pot of gold buried at its root.

### The beginnings of the Dożynki and the Okreżne

The happy conclusion of the harvests was greeted by the ancient Slavs with great ceremony and in strict accordance with their pagan cults. Thanks were offered up to the kind gods who had granted the abundant crops and so given their votaries far for the winter to come.

The Polish Chronicler Jan Długosz (XV century) in his chronicle of the times of King Kazimierz Jagiello writes so of the *Dożynki*:

*The Lithuanians had the custom, while they still laboured under the pagan superstitions of their ancestors, to, towards the end of October, into the groves they held sacred, and with their wives, children, and household attendants, make sacrifice of corn to the gods.*

After the sacrifice a feast was held lasting three whole days, which was made pleasant with songs and games. Out of these customs the tradition arose that after the harvest was gathered and stored in the barns, the landlord set a banquet before his house for his family, all his servants, and his neighbours. Good cheer went the rounds, songs were sung of old heroes, and the wealth of the landlord as well as his labour in the fields was praised. This banquet undoubtedly was the source of the many beautiful harvest songs that have come down to us, and the custom that is now observed to present to the lord of the manor on this occasion.

This ceremony is the most beautiful of Polish farm customs, and one which was taken over later by Prussian tribes.

### The Dożynki (Harvest home)

The *Dożynki* always followed upon the gathering of the winter-corn. The new year's harvest was then finished, passed with songs of the harvest to the manor-house to surrender the crops to the land-lord and to conclude their labour with a banquet and festival.

At the head of the procession strode the girl who had led all the others in the work. She was especially prepared and ornamented wreath on her head.

This wreath, which subsequently served to decorate the hall, was made not only of stalks of corn, but of everything that the field, the forest and the hive yield in the harvest. It symbolized the annual harvest as a whole. It contained, therefore, wildflowers, apples, bunches of herbs, and bay leaves, viburnum, and a doll made of wheat. According to an old custom, the grains must be shucked out of such a wreath for the next year's sowing. This prognosticates abundant new crops and harvests. It seems then that this importance of the wreath both as a symbol and as a pledge explains why in certain parts of the country the *Dożynki* holiday is known not as *Dożynki* but as *Wieniec* (The Wreath).

When the girl wearing the wreath approached the door of the manor-house, the farm-boys suddenly jumped out of their hiding and literally sprinkled the wreath with water, naturally while still on the girl's head. This custom arose out of ancient droughts for the ensuing year.

After the presentation of the wreath with appropriate speeches, there followed the singing of the dances and music. The *Dożynki* were one of the few days of the year on which the landed gentry joined with the peasantry in common feasts. Cato feeling was strong and still is so in the Polish country-side.

We cite here a description by Krasicki (XVIII century) of the *Dożynki* celebration in the house of Pan Podstoli (the Master of the Pantry), given by the famous connoisseur of Old-Polish customs, Gloger:

*About sunset we heard the singing of the mothers; the whole household went out on the porch to receive them, and when the wreath of corn was presented, one of the group, a venerable old man, made a speech to the gentry. Pan Podstoli answered to them all, thanking them for their faithful labour; in token of his thanks he invited them all to enjoy the festival he had prepared. So the ladies and ladies began the dances and the young ladies of the house, the farm-boys with the sons of Pan Podstoli, and the feast lasted long into the night.*

Krasicki's description gives a good idea of the colourful splendour of these *Dożynki* ceremonies in former times: the bright costumes of the peasants, flashing orange and crimson and green, and the rich materials and gold brocades in the dress of the Polish gentry, all this on the background of the manor-house and village gleaming in the torch light.

### The Okreżne (Harvest Feast)

Polish village and manor life observes still another ancient custom, the so-called *Okreżne*, which resembles the *Dożynki*. This celebration is simply one big banquet on the turn of the summer into autumn, and takes place only after the harvest of all the crops (the *Dożynki* are after the winter-corn), thus closing the work of the whole summer.

In the *Okreżne*, the *Dożynki* unite the lord and the peasant in a common festivity. In old times the lord of the manor made preparations for the *Okreżne* far in advance, and the invited guests were feted with plain but very abundant dishes such as *barszcz* (beet-root soup), *kapusta* (cabbage and cabbage soup, together), cereals, beer, meat and barley whiskey. The feast was always traditionally opened with the lord making to the most important and respected peasant.

Polish temperament, the peasant's no less than the lord's, can not express itself on such occasions without dances. So the *Okreżne*, too, were filled out with lively dances in the open air to the music of the characteristic country orchestra. The dances began of necessity with a *Polonaise* to which the lord led the wife of the lord's land manager while the lady of the manor dances with the *sołtyś*.

### Blessing the Cattle.

In describing the beautiful festivals of the Polish country-side connected with the harvest customs, whose colour, charm, movement, and tradition may be fully appreciated only by those who had at least once taken part in these cereales, whole herds, and yet somehow profoundly dignified celebrations, it is not out of place to mention in conclusion another custom bearing on a different aspect of the life of the Polish peasant.

The Polish peasant always was and still is deeply religious. In the latter half of the summer he observes, in conformity to tradition and in his simple uncomplicated faith, the annual blessing of the cattle. Places are appointed where the priest blesses their cattle, and on the appointed day the priest goes all the rounds sprinkling the animals with holy water, of course after appropriate prayers have been said. The cattle thus blessed will be protected by Providence from disease and will live and multiply in health and strength. The sight of the peasants in the holiday dress standing heed to their animals on the hillside usually chosen for the ceremony, is something to attract any painter or tourist for its colour and originality characteristic of Polish folklore.

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